

From Council:

Rochester Recovery Update

3 February 2023

For all enquiries and requests, contact Council on 1300 666 535.

Thank You!

We want to acknowledge and thank the many wonderful people in the community helping to get Rochester back on its feet. Everyone's contributions toward the recovery effort, big or small, are highly valued and much appreciated. While there's still a way to go to return Rochester to normality, much progress is being made because of the generosity and hard work of the community, and those working behind the scenes and on the ground getting things done, including Council officers, emergency services and government agencies.

Rochester Recovery Committee

A special thank you to the Rochester Recovery Committee which continues to meet regularly to address actions within the Recovery Action Plan. Committee members include: Leigh Wilson (Chairperson), Cate Ward, Jane Reid, Amanda Logie (Community House), Darrel Schwab (Ward Bros), Judith Gledhill and Hayley Ettershank (emergency services), Karen Laing (REDHS), Liz Trewick (St Joseph's), Glenda Nichol (Rochester Business Network), Keith Oberin and Lachie Cozens (Campaspe Shire Council), and Angela Carey (Emergency Recovery Victoria).

Council Flood Recovery Follow-Ups

Council representatives are currently contacting residents of Rochester to follow up on a range of recovery matters. Funded by Emergency Recovery Victoria, the purpose of the follow-ups is for Council to confirm household flood damage with residents. It will also provide an opportunity for residents to ask questions about their property and their health, such as mould, mosquitoes and wellbeing. All residents of Rochester, whether you're currently in your home or living temporarily elsewhere, will be included in the follow-up program and can expect a telephone call to arrange a follow up session.

Extra Community Repairs and Tidy-Up

While many of the parks, gardens and pathways around Rochester have already been repaired, from this week, a multi-function team from Council's Parks and Works Department will undertake a dedicated repair and clean-up program of some specific areas around town.

Some of the areas to receive this additional attention include:

- repairs to the roundabout at the bridge – gravel surface and damaged edging
- cleaning of rubbish and weeding of garden beds and splitter islands
- removing gravel from pram crossings
- fixing wheel ruts in nature strips
- fixing broken bollards in main street
- replacing missing / broken pit lids



Repair of Damaged Roads

Council is about to appoint a panel of contractors to accelerate the urgent repair of flood-damaged roads. These emergency works are fully funded by the state and federal governments, and are expected to take about three months to complete. While these externally-funded emergency works are underway, Council's ongoing road construction and maintenance activities will continue. Please note that Council-funded plant and equipment are not able to be used to repair the flood-damaged roads. Emergency works at the Pascoe Road floodway, just west of the Heathcote – Rochester Road, are expected to be completed in the first week of February.

Repair of Community Facilities

Below is a brief update on the repair of key community facilities:

- **Rochester pool** – Council is still awaiting quotes for the repair of the pool and infrastructure. It is unlikely that the pool will open this summer season owing to the extent of damage.
- **New child care facility (former kindergarten)** – stage 1 works are underway with the aim of opening the facility by the end of February. The facility is being updated and will be compliant with modern standards.
- **Tennis courts** – damaged carpet has been removed and works are on track for reopening of the courts in February.
- **Apex, Lions, Rotary and skate parks** – works are underway or have been completed.
- **Rochester Shire Hall** – a builder has been appointed and we are awaiting flooring materials.
- **Resource Recovery Centre** – works have been awarded to contractors.

Support for Young People

Council has been working in partnership with the Rochester Community House and other youth sector agencies to provide activities and opportunities for young people in Rochester, Elmore Events Centre and surrounding communities. Council secured state government funding via the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) to provide immediate assistance to young people. We've so far purchased sporting equipment, movie passes, and passes to participate in boxing, Pilates and gym. These opportunities have helped young people to maintain their social connections and support their health and wellbeing. Planning is underway for future activities. If you'd like to suggest any ideas or highlight any issues, please contact Council's Community Development Officer Youth, Ben Hearn at b.hearn@campaspe.vic.gov.au.

Support for Older People

The Commissioner for Senior Victorians Gerard Mansour visited Rochester on 23 January and met with community representatives to discuss a range of issues of interest to older people. Some of the matters discussed include; challenges facing displaced residents living in temporary accommodation, challenges keeping families connected, financial concerns, lack of venues for social connection, access to information, among others.

Support for Primary Producers

Agriculture Victoria

News and information for farmers and others in the agriculture sector:

- The online information hub for flood recovery is www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/floods.
- View the latest media releases and sign up to ag newsletters at www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/about/media-centre.

Are you a young or new farmer impacted by the flood looking to establish a successful career in the agriculture industry? The Young Farmer Business Bootcamp is coming to Swan Hill (9 and 10 Feb) and Maryborough (16 and 23 Feb). See the Agriculture Victoria website or social media for details.

Rural Finance

The following grant applications are open until 4pm on 30 April 2023:

- The Victorian Primary Producer Flood Recovery Grant of up to \$75,000 is available to support clean-up, relief and recovery efforts. This grant replaces the \$10,000 Primary Producer Flood Clean-Up and Relief Grants announced 21 October 2022.
- The Victorian Rural Landholder Grant of up to \$25,000 is available to help rural landholders who have an eligible smaller-scale primary production enterprise with clean-up, relief and recovery efforts. If you do not meet the eligibility for the \$75,000 Flood Recovery Grant, but operate a smaller-scale primary production enterprise, you may be eligible for this grant.
- The Victorian Primary Producer Flood Recovery Transport Support Program is available to help pay for the transport of emergency fodder or stock drinking water, and moving stock to agistment, sale or slaughter. This program provides a subsidy of up to \$15,000 paid at 50 per cent of the total costs.
- Primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations whose properties have been directly impacted are eligible to apply for a Victorian Primary Producer Flood Recovery Concessional Loan of up to \$250,000 to restore or replace damaged assets, and meet general expenses incurred while the clean-up is underway.

Support for Business

Access to Small Business Victoria's \$5,000 grants under the Small Business Flood Relief program is available until Tuesday, 7 February 2023.

Support for Everyone

Customer Service Centre / Library

Council's Customer Service Centre is open from Tuesday to Thursday, 8.30am – 4.30pm (closed for lunch between 12noon – 1pm) at the 4Rs. You can make all your Council payments, lodge requests and receive click and collect library services.

Recovery Hotline

Please note that the hotline (1800 560 760) has been set up to assist people about clean up services, temporary accommodation, and mental health and wellbeing support. All other enquiries should be directed to the appropriate authority.

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Victoria (DFFHV)

Representatives from DFFHV are available every Monday from the 4Rs to assist the community with emergency grants and other services.

Rochester Community House

The community house operates from the 4Rs with Foodshare, open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11am - 1pm.

Disaster Legal Help Victoria (DLHV)

DLHV will be at the 4Rs on Monday, 6 February from 11am - 4pm. You can also call DLHV on 1800 113 432 or visit www.disasterlegalhelp.org.au.

Health and Wellbeing

There are many resources and services that can assist you if you are feeling anxious, overwhelmed, worried or stressed. You can contact your GP or another local service such as Echuca Regional Health Wellbeing and Primary Mental Health. For those aged 12 – 25, there are organisations such as Headspace Echuca. Many workplaces and schools will have employee or student assistance programs. Support lines can also be contacted, such as Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636 or Lifeline on 131 114. For more information, scan the QR code or visit www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/mentallywell



Music Events Program

The state government has announced it will contribute \$1 million to enable live music events to be held across flood-affected regions to ignite tourism and reunite communities. People in flood-affected communities, including residents, venues, event presenters and artists, are encouraged to contact Music Victoria at info@musicvictoria.com.au to put forward ideas and discuss being part of the program.

Volunteer Call Out

If you're able to help with volunteer flood support activities conducted by DRA, please register with Disaster Relief Australia at www.disasterreliefaus.org/field-ops/operation-mactier

Waste Services

Household Flood-Affected Waste

The Rochester Transfer Station at 139 High Street (corner Sullivan Street) is still accepting household flood waste (under three cubic metres) free of charge. This is at the discretion of the operator.

The opening hours are:

Tuesday: 1 - 4pm
Thursday: 9am - 12noon
Sunday: 9am - 12noon

Building Waste

Residential quantities of building waste (less than three cubic metres) may be taken by residents to any of Council's resource recovery centres. For more information please visit www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/rrc.

What's Happening Next?

Council will continue to work with community recovery committees, support agencies, government departments and the emergency services to support those impacted by the floods. We'll also be working with the state government and local water authorities to amend the current flood study with new data from the recent flood. A range of potential flood mitigation options will then be developed. We'll keep the community informed of progress.